DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 651 PS 016 517

AUTHOR Spodek, Bernard
TITLE Reform in Chinese Kindergartens: The Preparation of Kindergarten Teachers.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; Curriculum Design; Curriculum Development; Developing Nations; *Educational Change; Educational History; *Educational Practices; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; High School Students; *Kindergarten; *Preschool Teachers; Primary Education; Scheduling; Secondary Education; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *China

ABSTRACT

Described are past and present changes in the preparation of kindergarten teachers in China, where kindergarten attendance is not compulsory and kindergarten programs are not universally available. Discussion focuses on (1) historical developments in, and current status of, Chinese kindergartens; (2) preparation of early childhood personnel, including teacher training in general and, specifically, kindergarten normal school education, which combines general high school education and teacher preparation for girls; (3) observations made during visits to several different kindergarten teacher training programs, including a kindergarten normal school, a kindergarten normal class in a middle school, and a kindergarten normal college; and (4) concerns of normal school personnel from several provinces who attended a university seminar. Concluding remarks focus on directions for reform in Chinese kindergarten teacher education. Appendices provide an English translation of a draft of a curriculum plan for trial use by an early childhood education normal middle school enrolling female graduates of junior high school. Related charts of course offerings for 3-year and 4-year programs are also included. (RH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED281651

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

# REFORM IN CHINESE KINDERGARTENS: THE PREPARATION OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Dr. Bernard Spodek
Professor of Early Childhood Education
College of Education
University of Illinois
1310 S.6th Street
Champaign, IL 61820

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bernard Spodek

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 016517

Paper presented at tha Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC: April 20-24, 1987.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# REFORM OF CHINESE KINDERGARTENS: THE PREPARATION OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Bernard Spodek
Professor of Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The People's Republic of China has undergone significant policy reforms in many spheres of life during the last decade. Because kindergartens represent the foundation of any educational system and are so closely entwined with families, reform in kindergarten education may have great ultimate significance for China. In kindergarten, as in any form of education, quality is a function of the teachers. By understanding the nature of the preparation of these teachers and the changes that are taking place in this preparation, one is better able to judge the reform itself.

The research reported here used a wide range of data sources -- some in English, others in Chinese -- including journal articles, agency reports, interviews with Chinese early childhood educators and teacher educators, and observations of kindergarten teacher training programs in Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Yangzhou, and in rural communities.

The data sources are limited. There is also a tendency on the part of many officials to 'put their best foot forward.' There is also a lack of information about early childhood education in general and an unevenness in the developments in the country.

## Historical Developments in Chinese kindergartens

While China's tradition of education goes back thousands of years, the earlier tradition did not include early childhood education or universal literacy. Education in Imperial China was focussed on preparing individuals for the examinations needed to become government officials.

The first traces of early childhood education are found at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the last days of the Qing dynasty, there was a concern for the lack of modern elements in Chinese society and for the need to reform Chinese life to allow the country to compete with and defend itself from western imperialist nations. The reformers looked to Japan for educational inspiration, because of its proximity and the success of Japan, an Asian country in adapting elements of western society and becoming stronger. Students were sent to study in Japan and many elements of that society were taken as models for the reform of Chinese imperialist society (Cleverley, 1985).

In 1903, a group of twenty kindergarten Japanese teachers were brought to China to establish kindergartens for children below age 6 and to prepare Chinese kindergarten teachers. An additional group of Japanese kindergarten teachers arrived in 1920. At about that time Wu Zu-zhe, a Chinese educator, went to Japan to study kindergarten education. Returning, he offered courses in child psychology and early childhood education. Japanese kindergartens at the turn of the century were Froebelian since missionaries from the United States established Froebelian

kindergartens, training Japanese kindergarten teachers, and translating Froebel's works into Japanese. Since child psychology was also taught, it would seem that the kindergartens had moved from their original Froebelian roots by 1920.

During this early period, Froebelian kindergartens were also established in China by western (mostly American) missionaries. Although programs for young children had been established earlier, these were not kindergartens but were characterized as "observing things around them schools." These schools were part of a welfare plan to help widows without economic support. The program, called Mong Yiang Yuan, hired widows to teach young children, similar to the "dames schools" of colonial America. While there seem to be no written descriptions of these schools available, the name suggests a possible Pestalozzian influence.

After World War I, the Chinese resisted Japanese influences in educational and cultural affairs, looking more towards America and Europe. Japanese political activities in Asia were unpopular in China and there was discontent with the Versailles Treaty which gave Japan extraterritorial rights. American money also became available to support Chinese educational efforts. Both missionary and secular American schools were established in China, and funds were provided to send Chinese to American universities. The most popular of these for Chinese students was Columbia University, where a number of Chinese students were influenced by John Dewey and the American Progressive Education movement.

Dewey's influence became even greater when he lectured extensively in China over a period of two years, 1919-21. These lectures took place in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and a number of smaller cities. Dewey was heavily supported during his stay by the normal schools in Beijing and Nanjing.

While Dewey's progressive philosophy did not have the wide ranging influence over the developing republic that some of his students had wished for, it did have a major influence upon educators and helped to shape evolving thought about education and teacher education. His lectures throughout China were carefully noted by his students, translated into Chinese, and published in book form. A number of short-lived progressive education journals were also founded during this period (Keenan, 1977).

Dewey's thought might have also laid the groundwork for the establishment of progressive kindergartens in the 1920's. These kindergartens evolved parallel to American progressive kindergartens and were influenced by them. They used child development knowledge in creating curriculum, much like their American counterparts, and saw the social life of the child as the subject of education in kindergarten. The best known of these progressive Chinese early educators is Chen He-qin.

Chen He-qin studied in the United States from 1914-1919. On his return to China, he became a professor of child psychology in the Education Division of Nanjing Southeast University. He established his first kindergarten in his home in 1923 and in

1928 established five experimental schools and kindergartens in Nanjing. His educational ideas continued to influence early childhood education in China through the 1940s. The Gulou kindergarten which he founded in Nanjing has again been given special recognition and his ideas are being studied once more.

Chen's educational experiments included creating a unit-based kindergarten curriculum, with learning activities centered around a theme that would be the focus of the program for several days or a week. He experimented with teaching reading within a language experience framework. He taught reading, writing, science, social science, and music within a flexible framework and in the context of play activities. He also devised new kindergarten equipment and studied their most effective use. Chen adapted the American progressive education philosophy to the Chinese context. He framed learning activities in the context of children's lives and paid especial attention to physical education and outdoor education.

Chen He-qin was also involved in the reform of kindergarten teacher education. While there had previously been some kindergarten teacher training, he established the first kindergarten normal school in 1940, the Jiangsi Early Childhood Education Normal School. Teacher training was offered in the context of "education through life." Buildings were designed and constructed while the program was being established. Chen He-qin designed the buildings and he, the staff and the students all participated in the construction of building, roads and streets. While the normal

school originally catered to local students, in time students came from 12 other provinces, in addition to Jiangsi province.

A standard teacher training curriculum had been established by the Ministry of Education in 1935. Chen, however, developed his own. The program consisted of three subjects: spiritual education, general education, and professional education. Each subject was taught so that its relation to kindergarten education would be evident. Textbooks were used flexibly and teaching was not restricted to texts. The slogan of the school, "teaching by doing, learning by doing, progressing by doing," reflected the same progressive philosophy that was the foundation of his kindergarten education. Education was to take place as a result of living, and formal education for potential kindergarten teachers was integrated with their practical life experiences. In 1945 the Jiangsi Early Childhood Education Normal School was merged with the Nanchang Women's Normal School and was moved to Shanghai (Zhong, 1979, 1981).

Chen He-qin was not the only leader in early childhood teacher education in the pre-1949 era in China. Zhang Xue-men was principal of the Beiping (Beijing) Preschool Education Normal School which was founded in 1930. Though also based upon a progressive education philosophy, this normal school seemed somewhat more traditional.

The curriculum of the Beiping Preschool Normal School included Chinese Language, Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles (Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood), philosophy,

early childhood education, kindergarten administration, children's literature, child psychology, play, children's hygiene, practice, music, fine arts, and physical education. The school stressed the relation of theory to practice, the importance of teaching skills and independent thinking to kindergarten teachers and the importance of teachers becoming involved in the social life of the community. Each of these normal school programs reflected and expressed a particular view of kindergarten education.

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, all of education underwent major change. Rather than continue to look to the West for appropriate models of education, China looked to the USSR. Multipurpose universities were reorganized into single purpose universities similar to those in the Soviet Union and progressive kindergarten practices based upon American theories were replaced by Soviet model kindergartens.

While there has been little change in kindergarten philosophy since the 1950s in China, there have been significant developments. Most important has been the expansion of kindergarten education and kindergarten teacher education, as kindergartens became more available to all young children.

Though kindergartens remained open during the Cultural Revolution, the training of kindergarten teachers all but stopped. Of the 19 kindergarten normal schools operating in 1965, only one the Hangzhou Kindergarten Normal school remained open, though it trained no kindergarten teachers during this period.

Since the Cultural Revolution, there has been an expansion of kindergarten teacher training. By 1979 there were 28 kindergarten normal schools enrolling 9,000 students (Chinese Education, 1982). Normal schools, however, have not been able to catch up with the demand for trained kindergarten teachers.

## Current Status of Chinese Kindergartens

Kindergarten education is the first level of formal education in China, serving 3- to 6-year-old children. Attendance is not compulsory nor is kindergarten universally available. Kindergartens may be sponsored by local education authorities, the Women's Federation, the local township (formally the commune), or the work unit (an office, factory or farm). Recently, a number of private kindergartens have also been opened. The State Education Commission (SEC), responsible for educational policy in China, establishes rules, regulations and standards and suggests curriculum activities for kindergartens. A trial edition of the kindergarten curriculum was developed by the SEC in 1981 and has been widely disseminated and followed. It is considered educational policy in the nation and is available to every kindergarten. The provinces and municipalities, however, are responsible for the provision of kindergarten education and its supervision.

The SEC standards are general guidelines and there are no mechanisms for implementation. Actual standards in kindergartens vary widely with lower standards in rural schools that in large cities and municipalities like Beijing and Shanghai. Standards are also higher in provinces along the coast than inland.

## Preparation of Early Childhood Personnel

While early childhood education personnel in China are also prepared at the college and university level, most kindergarten and primary teachers are trained in normal schools. These schools parallel our senior high school and the Chinese upper middle school (see Table 1). Ideally, teacher training takes place in a kindergarten normal school, which prepares only kindergarten teachers. General normal schools which train primary teachers, may also offer kindergarten classes. Kindergarten normal classes may also be provided as vocational education in upper middle schools. Kindergarten normal colleges offer five year programs, including three years of upper middle school/normal school plus an additional two years of college.

Normal universities prepare normal school teachers and senior middle school teachers as well as administrators, researchers, textbook authors and editors. All normal universities offer bachelor degree programs; some also offer masters degrees and, recently, Ph.D.degrees, though not in kindergarten education.

Kindergarten teachers are seldom admitted to normal universities since they lack a secondary education diploma, and the normal school program does not adequately prepared them for the university admission examination.

## Teacher Training

The preparation of kindergarten teachers has not been able to keep up with the expansion of kindergartens since 1949 and

there has been a continuing kindergarten teacher shortage since the Cultural Revolution. There are a number of ways in which the kindergarten teacher shortage is being addressed. One is through the expansion of teacher training in normal schools. The reduction in the number of 4-year normal school programs and the related increase in the number of 3-year programs was also aimed at increasing the supply of trained kindergarten teachers by turning them out more quickly. In addition, a number of short-term teacher training program are available. Many provincial and local education authorities are expanding in-service education, providing short courses ranging from one month to one year in duration to train kindergarten teachers. Normal university and normal school students are admonished to go to the countryside during their summer vacations to provide courses for teachers. Correspondence courses are offered and remote teacher training programs are being developed using videotapes. Kindergarten normal university programs, which provide teachers for the normal schools, are expanding their programs as well. Many of these efforts are supported by UNICEF as well as by Chinese educational authorities (Spodek, 1987).

It is doubtful, however, that kindergarten teacher training will be able to expand rapidly enough to solve the shortage of trained kindergarten teachers in the foreseeable future. Kindergartens are expected to continue to expand in the years ahead, with plans to double the number of kindergartens from 1986 to 1991. Given all the training efforts, it would be difficult to

keep up with the demand for the kindergarten teachers required by this expansion, let alone adequately train the unprepared or inadequately prepared teachers in existing programs. Here, as in other arenas, the sheer size of the Chinese population makes any problem a major one, requiring the infusion of vast amount of resources.

Kindergarten Normal School Education

Since all Chinese kindergarten teachers are women, the kindergarten normal school students are also women. However, a number of men are enrolled in normal university kindergarten programs.

Students are admitted into the kindergarten normal school after completion of their lower middle school education. Admission is by examination and interview. The examination used is the same as that for the upper middle school, covering those subjects taught in the lower middle school. The interview is used to identify persons who have pleasing voices, good manners and pleasing appearances as well as to determine whether the applicant is talented in art, music and dance, all considered important qualities of a good kindergarten teacher. Thus the interview also serves as an audition.

Concern was voiced about not enough applicants to study kindergarten education, which may reflect the low salaries paid to kindergarten teachers. While beginning salaries of kindergarten teachers and factory workers are equivalent, factory workers can actually earn considerably more in China through incentive

pay. Incentives may be needed to attract more applicants. This is not to say that admission to kindergarten normal school is not sought after. Many parents and their daughters see such training as valuable. Kindergarten teaching is a desirable career for women and graduates of these normal schools are assured of placement in a kindergarten within their own city or the surrounding area, which is not true of other career training.

In order to increase admissions to normal school, programs have begun to admit students into these schools earlier than into senior middle schools. Since there are relatively few places in senior middle schools and the competition is stiff, applicants are sometimes more willing to accept admission here rather than risk not being admitted to any program. Once admitted, the student is provided with a stipend that covers living costs. No tuition or fees are charged.

The normal school program is a combination of general high school education and teacher preparation. The curriculum of the normal school was established in a trial edition by the Ministry of Education - now the State Education Commission - in 1980 (see Appendix). This specifies the subjects taught and the hours of instruction assigned to each subject. There are no electives in the prescribed program. This curriculum was modified in 1986 with a reduction of hours of instruction in general education courses and no increase in education courses. When asked about the change, it was said that there was too much pressure on the students and they needed more time for vacation.

The kindergarten normal school program consists of four parts: general education, pedagogy, teaching practice, and performance. The general education component is similar to that of the regular senior normal school, though less can be covered. A number of normal school teachers complained that the textbooks provided for these subjects are the same as for the senior normal school and are therefore inappropriate. Some simply skip sections. Although most normal schools follow the SEC curriculum, they invariably modify it. In the area of general education, the modifications often consist of reducing instruction in mathematics and science while increasing instruction in language, art and music.

The pedagogy curriculum includes courses in child psychology and preschool education, as well as specific courses related to kindergarten content areas: language, arithmetic, natural science, music, dance, and hygiene. All these subjects are taught through lectures. There is a set of national textbooks for these subjects just as for the regular high school subjects. Recently, however, regionally published textbooks have become available.

Teaching practice includes observing children in kindergarten and simulated practice as well as student teaching. Student teaching takes up a small part of the actual program, limited to about four weeks included in the last year or split between the last two years. Students also watch demonstration lessons taught by model teachers.

In their simulations, students prepare a lesson complete with teaching aids, and perform the lesson with a group of their peers acting as young children. Another group of peers may observe the lesson and act as critics. It is felt that this type of practice has great value since the student performs as if in a real situation, yet without the complications that might arise in a regular kindergarten. As a result of these simulations, the students become more competent when they enter the classroom.

The arts are an important part of the normal school curriculum and a great deal of attention is given to instruction in painting, singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Every normal school student learns to play piano, accordion, or organ, instruments used in working with children. They also learn both folk and western dancing as well as how to use a variety of art media. The instructional focus is on adult performance, however, rather than on using the arts with children. This is partly a reflection of the fact that the teachers of these subjects are themselves trained in the particular area of adult performance rather than in their educational uses. But it may also reflect what is valued as education for proper young women.

Admission to a kindergarten normal school program, like admission to a normal university program, is tantamount to graduation. While students work is evaluated, there is no conception of 'flunking a student out.' Students will be criticized, but no matter how well or poorly they perform in their

course work, they will be promoted, graduated, and placed in a kindergarten.

Although the kindergarten training classes in the senior middle school function in a different context, they seem to try to emulate the education offered in the normal school.

Interestingly, while ideological training is part of the normal school curriculum as set out by the SEC, it tends to be deemphasized. A number of normal school educators said that they postponed ideological courses until late in the program. We also had the impression that these kindergarten educators felt that Marxist economics, dialectical materialism, and the history of the Chinese Communist party were less important for these students. Moral education is taught and students are expected to participate is socially useful activities.

## Visits to Normal Schools

We were able to visit a number of kindergarten teacher training programs accompanied by an interpreter and received interesting impressions from them.

### Visit to a kindergarten normal school in Nanjing

We arrived at the normal school in the early afternoon and were greeted by the school's principal along with a group of other staff. We were told about the history of the school and its current status, and were shown a videotape of the celebration of the normal school's anniversary, including performances by current students and testimonials by former students. We then visited the school.

One afternoon was set aside each week in the school program for interest groups, when students could select to join art, crafts, music, dance and dramatics groups or groups studying science, debating and parent education. The crafts group was making teaching aids that could be used in kindergarten. The parent education group was practicing giving advice to parents. A considerable number of parents came with their young children to talk with these students, sitting on one side of a long table that almost filled a room. On one side were students. Each pair was engaged in a dialogue, completely oblivious to those nearby.

We also had the opportunity to observe the performances of the students in an accordion class, and in practice rooms where students were playing pieces by Chopin, Mozart and other western composers. We were invited to watch a dance group perform. There was a high level of skill shown by each of the groups we visited. Unfortunately, we could not observe academic classes.

Visit to a kindergarten normal class in a Yangzhou middle school

This high school is famous for its vocational classes, operating a hotel and restaurant to provide practice for students in these areas. They also have a kindergarten teacher training class. After our orientation we toured the school. Then we were taken to a large classroom to observe a lesson in kindergarten mathematics. The teacher began the class with a short lecture. Then one of the students came to the front of the class gave a kindergarten mathematics lesson to about two-thirds of the students who acted as an alert kindergarten group, responding

singly and in unison when called upon. The rest of the class acted as critics. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked the critics for comments and criticism, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. At the end of the period, the teacher summarized the criticisms and referred to principles provided in her introductory lecture.

The student we observed was one of their better students. The simulated practice served as a model for others. It also gave the students practice in performing lessons so that when they would go into the kindergarten they would make fewer mistakes.

Visit to a rural normal school outside Yangzhou

After a long trip on a narrow dirt road, we arrived at the county normal school. The school enrolls students from the rural areas outside the city of Yangzhou. The students lived on campus, helped care for it, and even grew some of the food consumed there. The school buildings are quite simple, but well maintained.

As we walked from class to class we observed a variety of lessons in language, physical education (held outdoors), music, and art. Before leaving we were invited to watch the students sing, dance, and play musical instruments. The dances had been designed by the students themselves.

Visit to a kindergarten normal college in Shanghai

This had recently been upgraded from a normal school to a normal college with both a three year and a five year program.

Students are tested at the end of two years and those with the highest scores are enrolled for three more years. The others complete their final year at normal school and are then assigned to a kindergarten. We were told that the difference between the college and normal school curriculum is the depth of the courses rather than more subjects. There was also an extension program, offering off-campus instruction and giving proficiency examinations to teachers studying on their own.

The school is rich in resources. We were shown a language laboratory, complete with electronic teaching devices allowing each student to listen to tapes and tape their own speech, while the teacher can listen to any student on her monitor. There is also a large, well equipped room for computer education.

This college has been instrumental in developing the kindergarten normal school curriculum and the national textbooks. It is also involved in a project to evaluate the normal school programs which is scheduled to be done the following year.

There were a number of other normals schools we visited, including a new one established to prepare teachers for handicapped children. The ones described illustrate some of their variety and point up some of the common elements as well.

## Seminar with Normal School Personnel

A group of kindergarten normal school educators from many provinces in China were invited to join a seminar at Nanjing

Normal University. Most were graduates of that university. They described programs at their schools and raised concerns about kindergarten normal school education. These seminars augmented our other meetings with normal school educators.

As far as curriculum, as noted before, all of the schools represented followed the SEC curriculum with modification. They added more teaching practice, redesigned courses to be more practical, and made general education courses more relevant to the kindergarten. Some subjects were also added through weekly lectures rather than by adding classes.

A number of the schools offered short courses as well as the standard 3-year program or contracted with units outside their province to train kindergarten teachers, providing additional income to the schools. One administrator of a general normal school noted that these schools receive a higher level of funding than do the kindergarten normal schools. The concern for needed financial resources was noted by a number of participants. The consequences of tight budgets sometimes meant high teaching loads for staff and the absence of adequate supplies and equipment. One participant mentioned having to take her students to a department store to view children's toys since none were available in the school.

Some of the participants voiced concerns about the selection of students. There was a need to attract more competent students who would become kindergarten teachers. They questioned whether to use the examination or the interview as the first screening

device. There was also a concern voiced about some students being admitted through the 'back door,' independent of their success on the examination and interviews, and about the differences in backgrounds and abilities between students from rural areas and from urban areas. Rural students had poorer language backgrounds while other students sometimes lacked musical and dancing ability or physical prowess. All these were seen as deficiencies.

There were often problems with the SEC curriculum. Modifications included reducing the general education course requirements or teaching these subjects for their practical relevance to kindergartens. A biology class might be reconstructed to teach health and hygiene, for example. Greater attention was often given to Chinese language, teaching putonghua (the national dialect) to those who only knew their local dialect, as well as pinyin (romanized written Chinese) and calligraphy. Some schools added electives, including foreign language (primarily English), audio-visual instruction, and computer education) through afternoon lectures or Sunday classes. They also deemphasized political economics, political philosophy, and communist history.

Some of the participants described changes they had made in their training program. One person described how their school was trying to get away from the straight lecture approach to teaching and was providing five minutes at the beginning of every class session for students comments. Sometimes five students

would each take one minute for discussion while at other times a single student might use the entire five minutes.

One of the kindergarten normal schools reported modifying its procedures through the application of their version of the 'responsibility system.' Instead of giving all students the same stipend, students who did well in school and took responsibility for social tasks received more money. In addition, if an entire class did well on its monthly assessment, they were given a financial reward. Teachers also received a bonus if their class did well. Examinations in this school were designed and scored by all the teachers in a subject rather than by the classroom teacher alone so that the work of each teacher became more public. The school also allowed students to proficiency courses by examination rather than have all students to take all the required courses. While the students moved through the grades together, a student may now be retained if her work is poor. Through these and other innovations, the school was attempting to reform its practices.

## Reform in kindergarten teacher education

While the winds of change are blowing through the kindergarten normal schools, there are still many problems to be addressed. Kindergartens in China need many more teachers than the normal schools can provide. There are too few trained teachers for existing classes, yet new kindergartens continue to be established. The normal schools need to expand and normal

universities will need to supply more normal school teachers as normal schools expand.

The issue of quality of teacher training is just as important as quantity. The structure of education in China limits the quality of kindergarten teacher training as well. Since kindergarten teachers are trained in the normal schools, they are seldom admitted to normal universities,. Thus, even those normal school teachers who are trained in early childhood education, and not all are, lack any practical background as a kindergarten teacher. This situation leads to a more abstract training than should be offered. The normal school teacher knows about kindergartens from books, and lacks practical knowledge of classroom procedures.

Kindergarten normal schools are consistent in their educational approach to the kindergartens their teachers will run. The same foundational knowledge guides procedures in both institutions. If kindergartens are to be reformed, then the education of their teachers will require reform as well. Similarly if China wishes its kindergartens to be taught differently, then the nature of its teacher training will have to change. Knowledge, insight, and resources will have to be provided to create a true reform. At present UNICEF has developed a project on kindergarten education that is supporting that reform. A number of kindergarten educators from Chinese universities are studying in the United States under their support. While it would be wrong to have them return and try to emulate

our procedures, it is hoped that this will be the catalyst for reconstituting teacher education that will lead to the reform of Chinese kindergartens.

## References

Cleverley, J. (1985). The schooling of China: Tradition and modernity in Chinese education. Sydney, Australia: George Allen & Unwin.

Keenan, B. (1977). The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational reform and political power in the early republic. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Lijestrom, R., Noren-Bjorn, E., Schyl-Bjurman, G., Ohrn, B., Gustafsson, L. H., & Lofgren, O. (1982). Young Children in China. Clevendon, Avon, England: Multilingual Matters, Inc.

Jing, Hen-jiang, (1983). Beiping (Beijing) Preschool Education Normal School. You Er Jiao Yo (Preschool Education). August.

Spodek, B. (1987). Chinese Kindergarten Education and its reform. Paper presented at the National Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, April 23-26, 1987.

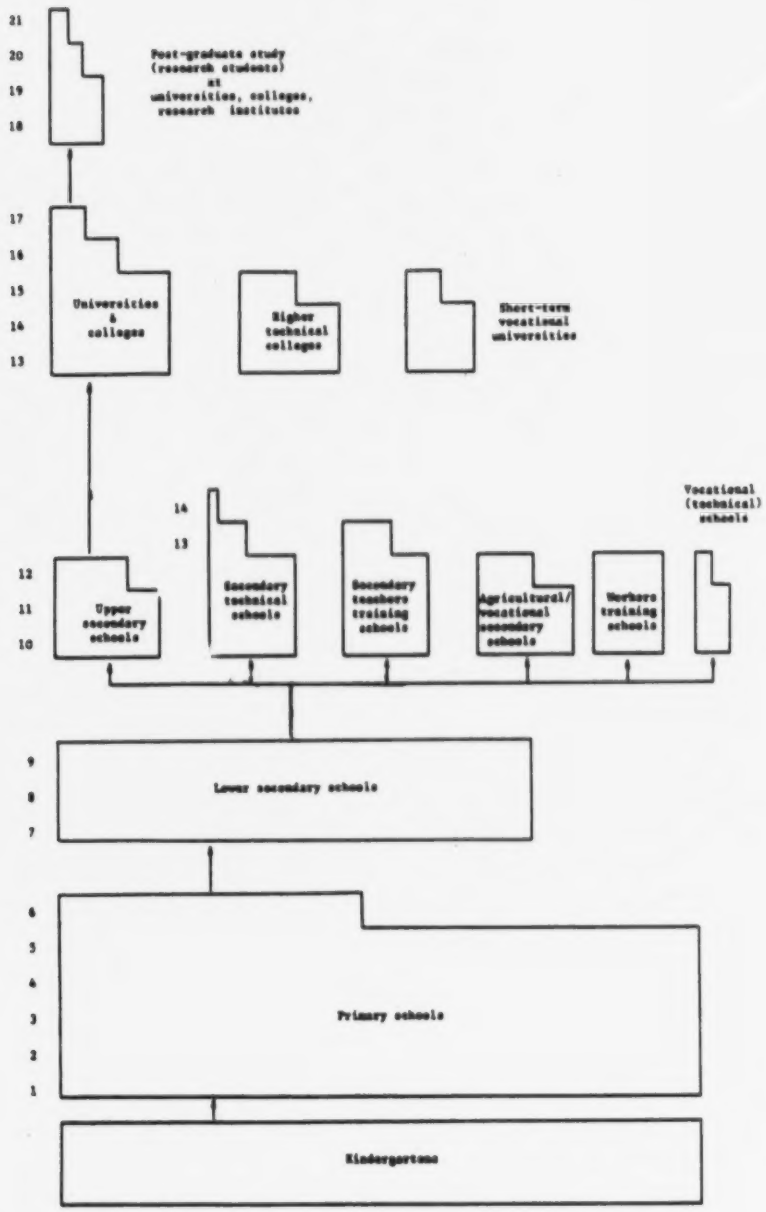
Teacher training, Encyclopedia of Education: 1980. Chinese Education, 14,(4),67-78.

Zhong Zao-hua (1979). Chen He-qin and the Nanjing Gulou kindergarten. Nanjing Shi Fan Xue Bao (Journal of the Nanjing Normal University), Issue 4.

Zhong Zao-Hua (1981). Chen He-qin's educational ideas and the Jiangsi Experimental Early Childhood Education Normal School. Nanjing Shi Fan Xue Bao (Journal of the Nanjing Normal University). Issue 2.

Table 1

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF CHINA



Appendix

A Draft Plan for Trial Use of Early Childhood Education

Normal Middle School

September, 1980

I. Objectives

The objective of the early childhood education normal school is to train qualified kindergarten teachers. These kindergarten teachers should have a high level of socialist consciousness, be able to assume a dialectical materialist view of the world, possess a communist morality, have the necessary cultural and professional knowledge and skills to function as early childhood educators, be in good health, love children, and be willing to work wholeheartedly for the socialist educational cause.

II. Duration of Training

Training in early childhood education normal middle school should last for either three years or four years. Enrollees should be female graduates of the lower middle school [junior high school].

III. Curricula

The early childhood education normal school should offer the following courses: politics, Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, foreign language, early childhood psychology, early childhood pedagogy, early childhood hygiene, methods of teaching language and natural and social science, methods of teaching arithmetic, physical education and methods of teaching physical education, fine arts and methods in fine arts, music and music methods, and dance.

Politics: The political text book of the upper middle school will continue to be used.

Chinese: This course consists of reading, composition, and basic knowledge of language and literature. The text materials should primarily be modern literature and children's literature, but not excluding carefully selected Chinese classical literature and foreign literature. In view of the needs of early childhood education, listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities should be further strengthened beyond the student's lower middle school level. There should be rigorous training in such basic skills as Putonghua (Mandarin), Hanyu Pinying, Chinese calligraphy, and speech performance.

Teaching methods of language and natural and social science: The student should have a good command of the Kindergarten Curriculum relating to Language and Natural and Social Science and should be competent to teach this subject.

Mathematics: Emphasis is placed on the teaching basic knowledge of mathematics and training in basic mathematical operations. Logical thinking should also be developed.

Teaching methods of arithmetic: The student should master the Kindergarten Curriculum of Arithmetic which emphasizes teaching arithmetic to young children.

Physics and chemistry: These courses are the same in content as the upper middle school physics and chemistry courses. They focuses on natural phenomena and basic knowledge of physical and chemical aspects of industry and agricultural production.

Biology: Knowledge of plant, animal and organic evolution should be taught beyond the basic program of the lower middle school. The introduction of genetics should also be taught. Knowledge of the characteristics of animals and plants of the local area should be introduced.

History and geography: This course builds on the basic knowledge of Chinese history, geography and world geography taught in the lower middle school. World history, Chinese history, physical geography, and cultural geography should be taught in relation to early childhood education. Part of the course should be devoted to local history and geography.

Foreign language: The foreign language course in the early childhood education normal school is part of the student's general education. The text book of the upper middle school is presently being used. Schools with four-year programs should offer this course, if possible; those with only a three-year program need not offer this course.

Early childhood psychology: Knowledge of general psychology, child psychology, and educational psychology are taught with special focus on early childhood psychology and educational psychology related to the needs of early childhood education.

Early childhood pedagogy: This course introduces general early childhood pedagogy including the history of early childhood education, the social, moral, intellectual, and physical education of young children. In addition, educational work and activities in kindergartens, the articulation between the nursery, kindergarten and primary school, work with parents, and the organization and administration of kindergartens. Attention is paid to training students to organize the educational activities of young children.

Early childhood hygiene: The characteristics of infant's and children's physical anatomy, the prevention of common childhood diseases of young children and knowledge of young children's hygiene and health care are all taught. The course also presents the rules and regulations of

hygiene and health care in kindergartens, basic knowledge of young children's nutrition and the forming of health habits. Students are also trained to apply this knowledge.

Physical education and methods of teaching physical education: The goal of this course is to promote the student's physical development, improve her constitution and cultivate a strong will, a good moral character and habits of persistent physical activity. Basic knowledge of physical education and basic skills training is included. Teaching physical education in kindergarten enables the student to master the kindergarten physical education program and includes training students to organize various physical activities for young childrens, including basic movement skills, children's exercises, and games.

Fine arts and methods of teaching fine arts: Painting, handicraft and the teaching of fine arts in the kindergarten are included in this course. The purpose is to acquaint the student with the Kindergarten Fine Arts Teaching Program, and preparation to teach painting, clay-kneading, paper-folding, toy and teaching-aid making and organizing young children's fine arts and manual training activities.

Music and methods of teaching music: Basic knowledge of music (including music theory, sight-singing, composition, instrument-playing, etc.), singing, and kindergarten music teaching methods are included. The student should develop knowledge of the Kindergarten Music Teaching program and be able to play one or two musical (preferably keyboard) instruments. The student should also be able to teach singing, organize young children's musical activities and performance, compose, and accompany children.

Dance: This course teaches the basic steps of dances of the various Chinese national minorities, and knowledge of young children's dance, as well as children mimic movement, musical games, children collective dance and performance. The students should be competent to teach children's dance and performance, and create and compose children's dance.

IV. Educational Practice and Production Labor

Educational practice is an essential part of professional training in the early childhood education normal school. Through the educational practice, the student learns to combine theory with practice and develop practical competence.

Educational practice includes visiting, observation and graduated teaching practice. Eight weeks of teaching practice is included in the three-year program and ten weeks in the four-year program. This time can be scheduled in one period or separately, but the final teaching practice should not be less than four weeks.

Students should also participate in productive labor. Labor activity should be accompanied by ideological and political education. The cultivation of the student's proper labor attitude and habits should be especially emphasized; knowledge and skills of industrial and agriculture production should also be learned. Two weeks should be dedicated to productive labor during every academic year, except the graduation year.

V. Time Allocation

The fifty-two weeks in each year should be distributed as follows:

A. The Three-year Program:

In the first year, thirty-six weeks are allotted for instruction, four weeks for review and examinations, holidays and reserve time, two weeks for productive labor, and ten weeks for summer and winter vacations.

In the second year, thirty-four weeks are allotted for instruction, four weeks for review and examinations, holidays, and reserve time, two weeks for educational practice, two weeks for productive labor, and ten weeks for summer and winter vacations.

In the third year, thirty-one weeks are allotted for instruction, five weeks for review and examinations, holidays and reserve time, six weeks for educational practice, and ten weeks for summer and winter vacations.

B. The Four-year Program:

In the four-year program, the first year is as the same as the first year of the three-year program, the second and third year in this program are as the same as the second year of the three-year program, and the fourth year is as the same as the third year of the three year program.

(Translated by Li Wei, University of Illinois, with the assistance of Bernard Spodek.)

APPENDIX I

TEACHING PLAN FOR THREE-YEAR PROGRAM

| Subject | Grade | Hours I | II | III | TOTALS | The percentage of individual subjects in total hours of instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Politics | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 171 | 5.46 |
| Chinese | | 6 | 6 | 4 | 544 | 17.38 |
| Teaching Methods of Language and Natural and Social Science | | | | 2 | 62 | 1.98 |
| Mathematics | | 4 | 4 | | 280 | 8.94 |
| Teaching Method of Arithmetics | | | | 1 | 31 | 0.99 |
| Physics | | | 3 | 3 | 195 | 6.23 |
| Chemistry | | | 2 | 2 | 130 | 4.15 |
| Biology | | 2 | 2 | | 140 | 4.47 |
| History | | 3 | | | 108 | 3.45 |
| Geography | | | | 3 | 93 | 2.97 |
| Early Childhood Psychology | | | 3 | | 102 | 3.26 |
| Early Childhood Pedagogy | | | | 4 | 124 | 3.96 |
| Early Childhood Hygiene | | 3 | | | 108 | 3.45 |
| Physical Education and Its Teaching Methods | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 233 | 7.44 |
| Fine Arts and Its Teaching Methods | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 269 | 8.59 |

| Subject | Grade | Hours I | II | III | TOTALS | The percentage of individual subjects in total hours of instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Music and Its Teaching Methods | | 4 | 4 | 4 | 404 | 12.90 |
| Dance | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 137 | 4.38 |
| Total Hours/Per Week | | 31 | 31 | 31 | 3131 | 100 |
| Total Weeks/Per Year | | 36 | 34 | 31 | | |
| Educational Practice (Week) | | | 2 | 6 | | |
| Production Labor (Week) | | 2 | 2 | | | |

APPENDIX II

TEACHING PLAN FOR FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

| Subject | Grade | Hours I | II | III | IV | TOTALS | The percentage of individual subjects in total hours of instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Politics | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 239 | 6.00 |
| Chinese | | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 748 | 18.78 |
| Teaching Method of Language and Natural and Social Science | | | | | 2 | 62 | 1.56 |
| Mathematics | | 4 | 4 | 4 | | 416 | 10.45 |
| Teaching Method of Arithmetics | | | | | 1 | 31 | 0.78 |
| Physics | | | | 3 | 3 | 195 | 4.90 |
| Chemistry | | | 2 | 2 | | 136 | 3.41 |
| Biology | | 2 | 2 | | | 140 | 3.52 |
| Geography | | | | | 3 | 93 | 2.34 |
| Early Childhood Psychology | | | 3 | | | 102 | 2.56 |
| Early Childhood Pedagogy | | | | 2 | 2 | 130 | 3.26 |
| Early Childhood Hygiene | | 3 | | | | 108 | 2.71 |
| Physical Education and Its Teaching Methods | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 301 | 7.56 |
| Fine Arts and Its Teaching Methods | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 405 | 10.17 |
| Music and Its Teaching Methods | | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 540 | 13.56 |

| Subject | Grade | Hours I | II | III | IV | TOTALS | The percentage of individual subjects in total hours of instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dance | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 135 | 3.39 |
| (Foreign language) | | (3) | (3) | (3) | (3) | (405) | |
| Total Hours/Per Week | | 30 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 3982 | 100 |
| Total Weeks/Per Year | | 36 | 34 | 34 | 31 | | |
| Educational Practice (Week) | | | 2 | 2 | 6 | | |
| Production Labor (Week) | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | |